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Scotch Line landfill hatches bird-brained scheme for gulls

by **THOMAS SMITH**
Editor

On a cold Monday morning, I arrived at Scotch Line Landfill. As soon as the co-owner of Royal Canadian Falconry arrived in his truck, dozens of herring gulls that were feasting on the landfill took to the skies.

For the past three weeks, Andrew Carroll and his team at Royal Canadian Falconry began visiting the Scotch Line Landfill to deter the gulls with their birds of prey. In the past, they have serviced the Haliburton Landfill to work on controlling their pigeons. From only three weeks of their sessions, the gulls can recognise that Carroll's truck contains a predator. On this occasion, that predator's name is Quetzel, a Harris's hawk.

"I started doing this in 2017," says Carroll. "Me along with my wife Amy MacAlpine started a company called Royal Canadian Falconry and we do a lot of fun things, we do a lot of education, demonstration, talk to kids about conservation, schools, camps, and renaissance fairs," says Carroll. "But we have another side of the business and that is bird abatement, or bird control."

"We use our trained raptors to deter nuisance birds from all sorts of sites. Things like oil refineries and keeping the pigeons out of the infrastructure, to blueberry orchards and keeping all the nuisance birds from eating the crops, to keeping the gulls out of the landfill. This kind of work takes me all over the province doing all sorts of fun things."

"If I'm doing gull nesting prevention on rooftops in the GTA, it will be a couple visits a week for a couple hours to convince the gulls not to nest there. Once the gull nesting season is over, the gulls have no reason to be there, so I don't need to be there."

"During the blueberry season, when the berries are starting to ripen, the birds are going to be there all day every day. So during the growing season, we can be there sun up to sun down protecting their crops."

Quetzel, a Harris's Hawk perches on a shipping container at the Scotch Line Landfill. /THOMAS SMITH Staff

While bird abatement borrows techniques from falconry, by definition, bird abatement is not falconry as it does not involve actively hunting with a bird of prey.

"You don't just go out and find a wild falcon," says Carroll. "There is an

see BIRDS page 2

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Birds of prey a deterrent for gulls

from page 1

apprenticeship program here in the province."

"It can be tricky to get into the sport because you have to find somebody willing to take you on as an apprentice," says Carroll.

"The birds that we use are all captive bred. They were bred in captivity for the purpose of falconry. To be able to obtain these birds that we own, you have to have the special licenses and all your qualifications to obtain them," says Carroll. The apprenticeship period is a minimum of 15 months to encompass two hunting seasons, but can take longer at the discretion of the mentor. A falconry license and small-game hunting license is mandatory in Ontario to participate in falconry. It is also recommended to get a migratory bird hunting license.

"There is a wild trap program where some falconers will go out and catch one from the wild, but that is really for the purposes of conservation," says Carroll.

For birds of prey, 80 per cent do not make it to their first year.

"There are various reasons for this high mortality rate including injury, competition with siblings, predation by other animals like foxes, coyotes, other birds of prey, etc. We do see a large die-off in the early winter months due to starvation," says MacAlpine. "The decrease in temps means they need more food to keep warm, yet the prey is less available because most mammals don't breed over winter, some hibernate, young mammals have gained experience and learned how to evade predators, and the migratory birds have headed south. Increased need for food, with decreased available prey is a deadly combination."

Quetzel lands on Andrew Carroll's falconer's gauntlet after abating gulls at Scotch Line landfill. /THOMAS SMITH Staff

"They are new, they don't know how to hunt very well," says Carroll. "When we do the wild take program, we go out and trap one of the juveniles, we hunt with them for one or two seasons, let them learn how to be a bird of prey without all the risks that go along with being a bird of prey." "So now, Mother Nature has a breeding age bird that is successful at hunting so they can have a long, successful life," says Carroll. There is a list of approved species in Ontario that can be captured, but must be taken under a certain age. Some falconers will also release the wild-caught birds of prey back into the wild to aid in conservation, but it is not required.

At their headquarters in West Guilford, Royal Canadian Falconry offers educational opportunities to guests, the opportunity to handle them, and see the birds in action. They also offer animal wrangling services for films, tv, and other productions and have had their birds featured on HGTV, Animal Planet, and in Rolling Stone.

"My father's family was originally from Haliburton," says Carroll. "My grandfather was the doctor in town." Carroll's grandfather, Louis Carroll was the first full-time physician to reside in Haliburton. "Since I've moved up here, I've met a few older people and they have figured out who I am and they go 'Oh, your grandfather delivered me and my brothers!' I feel very at home here because I spent my summers growing up, and we always travelled up here. It just so happened that we found the perfect spot to run our business here. It is very touristy, especially in the summer so it works really well for that side of the business."

Currently, Royal Canadian Falconry takes care of 20 birds of prey.

"We have a variety of falcons, hawks, and owls," says Carroll. "Most of the birds are dedicated to this falconry-based bird control work. There are some birds we use for educational stuff and we also breed falcons and hawks that we sell to licensed falconers."

Despite the gull's penchant for the landfill's open air buffet, they have become a growing concern to the health and safety of the staff that work there.

"It is a health and safety concern and damage and destruction. Bird feces carries a lot of bacteria and things that you don't want around your friends and family. Especially when you have big flocks like this, it gets overwhelming. It is mostly due to health and safety concerns when we are brought onsite," says Carroll. "Say you are an electrician working on an oil refinery setting up your tools then you come in the next morning and you have pigeon feces all over your equipment, that is a health and safety concern. That is the main reason that we are called in."

Their bird control services are not limited to pigeons and seagulls, but can include abatement of starlings, geese, cormorants.

"Any nuisance bird, we probably have a solution for you," says Carroll. "The reason why birds don't like being around is because we are triggering a fear response in them."

"They don't like the hawk, they leave."

After explaining their business, Carroll brings Quetzel out and lets her fly. Before she even takes off, there are less than 10 gulls on the ground. The sky, already filled with a hundred flapping gulls swirling in the sky.

"To prevent her actually catching them, I give them a decent head start. When they see her, they get up, and then I will let her go," says Carroll.

Occasionally, the birds will catch another bird as their prey.

"It's not even an incident. These birds are protected by the federal government. We work very closely with the ministry to get very special permits to do this kind of work," says Carroll. "Our job isn't to catch and kill all the birds in the neighborhood. That's not our job. Our job is to say this is our turf now, this is our spot."

Carroll loves working with birds of prey, with the business quickly expanding since they began in 2017.

"They're just amazing creatures. It is a really special relationship we have with these birds. It is not something you'd have with a cat or a dog. We don't hang out on the couch tickling their bellies at the end of the night. We are a team, cooperative hunters," says Carroll. "They have their own autonomy. They have their own personalities. Every single one is different. They let us be a part of their hunt. They let us be a part of it, which is my favourite part of this experience. These amazing creatures have trust and respect for us, enough to let us be a part of what they do."

Royal Canadian Falconry conducts experiences and workshops out of their centre in West Guilford. For those interested, experiences can be booked at www.royalcanadianfalconry.com. Currently, they are offering a 15 per cent discount on gift cards for workshops and experiences. This sale lasts until Dec. 31.

A Special Note to our valued subscribers

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In the event that the strike lasts longer than two weeks, we will extend your subscription by one month.

The Times

MH starts budget process with 8.7% tax levy increase

by JAMES MATTHEWS
Times Staff

Minden Hills council has delved face-and-eyes into the iterative process to nail down next year's operating and capital budget.

Iterative process.

Yeah, I had to look it up, too. According to the Canadian Oxford Dictionary, it's a process in which a set of steps or instructions is repeatedly executed until a natural end point is reached.

That's an apt description of the weeks and meetings required to hammer out an annual spending plan.

Cynthia Fletcher, the township's CAO, said discussions will inform the 2025 business and work plan, the tax supported budgets, and the water and wastewater budgets.

The budget's first draft included a 9.6 per cent tax levy increase, or 8.7 per cent after estimated growth is factored in. Those numbers are likely to change between now and when the final draft is completed.

Council got off the opening salvo in the process when it met Nov. 21. But department staff, Fletcher, and Wendelin Lonergan, the township's treasurer, met numerous times in the weeks leading up to the budget's first draft.

"There is still some unknowns in the budget that our treasurer will point out to council," she said. "Things like growth or our deficit/surplus that will be identified and brought back in January with more solid and refined numbers."

She said council will consider departmental budgetary requests in January.

The hope is that a final draft of the budget will be considered by council Feb. 4, 2025.

The proposed works and business plans reflects the township's 2024 accomplishments, she said.

"We have some successes that was supported by council in our community," Fletcher said.

Those success have included work to restore the Village Green, electronic payment options, accessible downtown public washrooms, and community engagement initiatives.

The township's focus next year will be on modernizing more service processes, improving infrastructure, strategic priority planning, and long-range financial planning.

"A more comprehensive review is to happen in January," Fletcher said.

Lonergan said the water and wastewater numbers were driven by the municipal 2022 water and wastewater study.

Accordingly, the water rate will increase two per cent Jan. 1, 2025. The wastewater rate will jump three per cent next year.

"We're going to be looking in 2025 to look at the status of the current 2022 study and look at updating the study in a timely manner within the legislative requirements," Lonergan said.

> There will be some changes from one department to the next and shfiting of funds to ensure that the bottom amount raised by taxation is reasonable.
>
> — WENDELIN LONERGAN, TREASURER

When the study was done in 2022 the increases were two per cent and three per cent for water and wastewater respectively.

"But we don't know what those rates will be going forward with the current pressures of inflation since COVID," she said.

Social shutdowns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic created disruptions in the supply chain for many goods and services. Municipalities, businesses, and consumers have as a result been shouldering financial strain caused by the disruptions.

The township is considering improving filtration at the Minden wastewater treatment plant in the next year, she said. Pipes could be replaced or repaired, there could be well inspections and cleanings, and watermain valves replaced.

For the Lutterworth Pines system, the township is considering flow metre replacement, well inspections and cleanings, and repairs to the distribution system.

"We're looking forward to doing at least a five to a 10 year capital plan to make sure that we're making enough money in the systems to do those capital replacements," Lonergan said.

Property taxation is the largest source of revenue for the township. The provincial government postponed the 2020 property assessment update because of restrictions imposed by the pandemic.

Property assessments in Ontario continue to be based on January 2016 values. An outdated valuation date and increased market values yields a growing disparity between the assessed value of a property and its market value.

Lonergan said more information related to the tax rate and impact to the average household will come during January budget meetings.

"In January, those numbers will be refined and further calculated," she said. "I always say that the budget is like a pie. So no matter how many different ways you cut the pie, it's still (the same sized) pie."

"There will be some changes from one department to the next and shifting of funds to ensure that the bottom amount raised by taxation is reasonable."

Of the 8.7 per cent projected tax levy increase, more than three per cent of that is caused by the increase in service charges from the Ontario Provincial Police.

The 2025 cost of policing increased by 18.7 per cent over this year. That's a jump on the bill from $424,665 this year to $2.3 million next year.

The municipality has no control over what's charged for policing, she said.

"We don't know if the province is going to provide any relief in that regard," she said. "So we have to kind of work around that, but we want to ensure services, the levels, are consistent and that we can still operate, do the things that residents and council wishes."

"We do receive some funding from both the province and the federal government," Mayor Bob Carter said. "But the overwhelming majority of all the funds that we require to operate the municipality come from the taxpayer."

Haliburton County's upper tier council is also hammering out its budget. That budget is influenced by certain costs like child services and housing that are shared with City of Kawartha Lakes. Carter said there has been an increase in the cost of those services.

After the City of Kawartha Lakes has factored its cost increase into its budget, Haliburton County will know how much it has to kick in for those services.

"It's a substantial amount of money," he said.

So taxpayers' dollars are stretched between the municipality, the county, and then there's the school board that requires a share.

"Which makes up your total tax bill," Carter said. "So we are really dependent to know what the tax increase will be from the county because that then influences what our tax increase could or should be."

For every extra $100,000 increase charged to the township, the municipal tax rate rises by one per cent.

"So it doesn't take very much of an increase to have a large impact on all of our taxpayers," Carter said.

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Council and Closed Session meetings are currently being conducted in-person and with electronic participation. Meetings begin at 9:00 am unless otherwise noted. The scheduled upcoming meetings are:

- **November 28 – Regular Council Meeting, Haliburton Council Chambers**
- **December 12 – Regular Council Meeting**

Members of the Public are invited to observe Council proceedings by attending in-person or via the live-stream link on the Township CivicWeb Portal. Please note that there is only one meeting in December.

A MESSAGE FROM THE FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Please be advised that tax and water/wastewater accounts will still need to be paid during a postal strike. Available payment methods include in-person cash and debit, online or telephone banking, and payment from your financial institution. Please visit our website for more details.

MINDEN HILLS Cultural Centre

MINDEN HILLS CULTURAL CENTRE

- The Gallery will be closed from November 26 to December 4. We reopen on December 5 with an exhibit from our permanent collection, featuring André Lapine (1866-1952).
- The MHCC and the HCPL-Minden Branch are offering a free screening on December 5 at 1 pm of Malartic (2024), a documentary by filmmaker Nicolas Paquet. Admission is free. No pre-registration is required.
- The UFO Craft Group is meeting in December on Friday the 6th and 20th from 1pm to 3pm.

For information on all the programs and exhibits offered at the Minden Hills Cultural Centre: culturalcentre@mindenhills.ca or call 705-286-3763.

SAFE WINTER DRIVING

Leave extra space when driving in icing conditions. Approach intersections slowly when they are covered with ice or snow. Watch out for black ice - a thin, nearly invisible coat of ice that can make the road look like shiny new asphalt. Pavement will look grey or white in the winter.

A MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Check your home heating system. Regularly replace furnace filters. Keep all areas around the furnace clean and unobstructed. For preventative care, have your central heating system cleaned and serviced by a certified HVAC contractor once annually. Use of fireplace screen, guard, or glass doors to keep hot ash and sparks contained. When building a fire, strategically place logs on a metal grate at the back end of your fireplace; always use kindling to ignite the fire.

NOTICE OF SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING AND CLOSED SESSION DECEMBER 3

Please take notice that there will be a Special Meeting of Council and Closed Session meeting on Tuesday, December 3rd, at 1:00 pm, in the Minden Hills Council Chambers (7 Milne Street).

The purpose of the closed session meeting is for education and training, pursuant to section 239(3.1) of the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended, regarding community engagement. For more information, please contact:

Victoria Bull
Clerk
705-286-1260 admin@mindenhills.ca

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Cash reserves may balance health budget

by **JAMES MATTHEWS**
Times Staff

The public health unit that serves Haliburton County anticipates an increase of less than one per cent in next year's budget.

The Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit has inked next year's spending plan in the context of if its merger with Peterborough Public Health falls through.

Those public health agencies announced in February that their respective boards approved their voluntary merger.

The Ministry of Health announced in August 2023 plans to strengthen the public health sector by offering one-time funding, resources, and supports to public health agencies that decide to voluntarily merge by Jan. 1, 2025.

Given there are weeks until the deadline, the HKPR set its draft budget for next year as if the merger doesn't happen.

"That is the context for this budget," said Dr. Natalie Bocking, the health unit's medical officer and CEO. "This is a solo, non-merger budget for HKPR."

Bocking said there are three core "buckets" of funding the unit gets from the provincial Ministry of Health.

The first is its base funding that's cost-shared with Haliburton County, Northumberland County, and City of Kawartha Lakes.

"That base funding funds all of the requirements as a global amount in the Ontario Public Health Standards," she said. "That amount, because it's cost-shared, is the amount that municipalities also contribute into."

The second bucket of money goes to the programs that are 100 per cent funded by the province.

And the third bucket is one-time funding, she said. The local health unit has traditionally used that money for things like the needle exchange program and infrequent investments such as new vaccine refrigerators and security cameras.

HKPR does get some money from the Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services for the Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program.

"That funding has to be used for that program," she said. "The global amount for our base budget is the amount we have flexibility for to allocate across all of our different programs and services."

The province has maintained its contribution of a one per cent increase applied to the total base funding next year. But there will be limited one-time funding opportunities, she said.

"We don't know the timing or the outcomes of the review of the Ontario Public Health Standards," she said. "Should there be major changes in requirements of health units, that would obviously change how we might allocate our resources."

Another uncertainty is a review of the funding formula for the provincial contributions to health units.

"We don't have a timeline or idea of what that will include," Bocking said. "I think it's unlikely that it will include a massive investment into public health provincially, but we also like to still hope and advocate for that."

Additional pressures in the budget's development was negotiated collective agreements with staff for higher wages parallel to inflation. And insurance increases are anticipated for 2025.

"And then we do continue to see program areas under very significant pressure related to increased demands from the province for programming," she said.

The health unit is responsible for the management and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines for primary care as well as the new provincial program for both adult and child respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccines.

"We receive a very small amount of reimbursement from the province for delivery of those additional programs but have not actually received long-term sustainable funding to support that expansion," Bocking said.

A new Emergency Management Guideline added additional requirements for health units to support fall respiratory preparedness. Those provincial demands for more work extend to substance use prevention and harm reduction measures.

"Our ability to respond to the drug poisoning crisis or other local need as they arise really might change year to year depending on what the context is," she said.

There are a number of means the unit and its staff have recently adopted as cost-saving measures. Some supplies are no longer needed because of the hybrid working environment. Some vacant positions have been decided to remain vacant or unfunded in 2025.

Cash reserves may be used next year to balance the budget. Because of uncertainty about next year's budget, some surplus cash wasn't used this year. That can be carried forward for 2025.

She said there's about $1.4 million in cash surplus that could be used to offset pressures in the 2025 budget. But that's money that generates interest while sitting in a bank account.

> "I think it's important to note that this is not a sustainable approach long–term. A sustainable approach, we wouldn't need to offset pressures using our cash surplus every year.
>
> **— DR. NATALIE BOCKING, HEALTH UNIT MEDICAL OFFICER AND CEO**

"So this is a balance of using our cash surplus in reserve but then accounting for that in our operating budget," she said.

The goal is to maintain the current level of service delivery by using a responsible amount of cash surplus to offset the challenge in 2025 and to impose a reasonable tax levy increase on the municipalities the unit serves.

The unit is looking at a 0.7 per cent increase globally in its consolidated 2025 budget over this year. There's expected to be a two per cent increase in its cost-shared budget to respond to inflationary pressures and operational expenses.

"I think it's important to note that this is not a sustainable approach long-term," Bocking said. "A sustainable approach, we wouldn't need to offset pressures using our cash surplus every year."

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Walkabout Farms Hay Fundraiser a success

by **THOMAS SMITH**
Editor

Seven years ago, founder Jennifer Semach realized the need for a therapeutic riding academy in the Highlands. After years of working for the YWCA with youth with mental illnesses and volunteering with the OPP and fire department, Semach knew that she could combine her lifelong love of horses and crisis support. Semach founded Walkabout Farm Therapeutic Riding Association. Walkabout Farms is a registered charitable organization that provides equine assisted therapeutic riding to anyone who struggles with physical or developmental disabilities. Clients that visit the farm range from people with autism, dementia, to mental illness.

Working with and riding the horses allows for developing confidence, communication skills, therapeutic healing, and a plethora of other benefits.

All at no cost to the clients and families that utilize their services. With the high poverty rate in Haliburton County, Semach wanted their services to be accessible fro everyone that needs it no matter their socioeconomic circumstances.

Currently, the farm has nine horses in their stables a variety of barn cats and a colony of rabbits for visitors to interact with.

In October of this year, Walkabout Farms was ecstatic to open their new welcoming centre. For the first time, they would be able to host therapy sessions and learning in a sheltered space with hydro. The building was built using assistance by the Chamandy Foundation, a Quebec-based charity.However, there were unexpected costs that arose while working on finishing their build..

Kelly and D'Arcy Kinch, program participants at Walkabout Farm Therapeutic Riding Association, stand with Gracie. /Submitted

Walkabout Farms Therapeutic Riding Association relies solely on charitable donations from the public, grants, private family donations, and charitable organizations. They have also applied to receive funds from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to improve accessibility.

After looking at their budget, Semach realized that their organization was running low on funds to complete their projects and supply their horses with hay for the winter

"We have to be very careful where our money goes," says Semach.

Semach knew that they would need assistance from the public to feed their horses and so they started their Winter Hay Fundraiser. Semach was transparent in that a bale of hay costs her $8.75 each. With their nine horses eating five to seven bales of hay per day in the winter, filling their tummies would cost over $1,500.

Members of the community flocked to support the Winter Hay Fundraiser. Dave Hammond, of Boshkung Brewing organized a charitable euchre event and Tina Gilbert offered people to be entered for a chance to win a free cleaning session for each bale of hay that was donated to the Walkabout Farm's fundraiser.

"Over 100 people donated a bale of hay or more," says Semach. Through their fundraising efforts, Semach was able to raise over $7,000 in support of their horses and the hay arrived for them last week. The money left over will go towards the farm in other ways, such as improving accessibility and care of the animals.

"We need as many funds that we can find until we can get foundation funding," says Semach.

Semach says that many therapeutic riding charities get their funding from local charitable families. In Haliburton County, it has been difficult finding a family or foundation that is interested in supporting Walkabout Farms. Most donors want to keep their charitable donations within their own communities. With Haliburton County being heavily reliant on tourism and cottagers, Semach has not been able to find private donors interested in heavily supporting their services. For a lot of cottagers, Semach says that they do not know that Walkabout Farms existed in the county.

Currently, Walkabout Farms is also undertaking their Recreational Equine Assisted Participation (REAP) program. These sessions, offered at long term care facilities or at Walkabout Farm allow seniors and LTC patients to interact with the horses to better their mood, relax them, and connect with animals and nature, bettering their health.

This program is also in collaboration with McMaster University and is actively being researched with a team led by Dr. Sharon Kaasalainen to analyze the benefits of equine therapy with dementia patients living in long term care facilities.

"Having validation from the scientific community is going to be amazing," says Semach.

Walkabout Farms has accounts with credit at local businesses like the Minden Mercantile and Feed Co. and Pet Tyme Animal Krackers. For those wanting to support Walkabout Farms directly, they accept money donations through e-transfer using the email walkaboutpps@hotmail.com.

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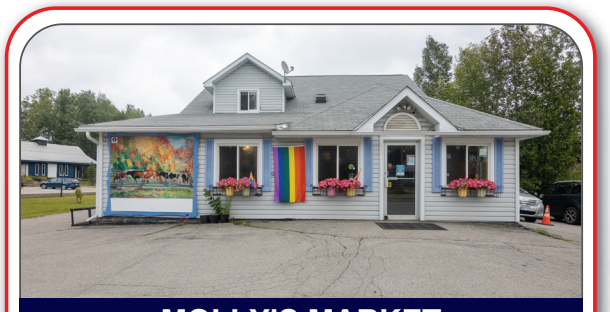

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Plethora of pills

FOR THE past five years, I accepted that the daily acid reflux was a part of my life. After an effort to make changes to what I was eating, the acid splashing in my throat began to get worse. In addition to a plethora of unpleasant bowel symptoms, my doctor said that I could either have Celiac disease, or a Helicobacter pylori infection. After waiting for my blood test results, I have thankfully learned that I do not have celiac disease.

"Give us this day and our daily bread" would be very problematic if the gluten in the bread triggered my immune system to try to kill me.

My blood test result signaled to the doctor that my doctor was actively fighting a nasty case of an H. pylori infection.

Helicobacter pylori, is a bacterium that infects almost half of the human population. Fortunately, the majority of people are asymptomatic. I am just lucky enough to have become infected with a strain that is particularly virulent and enjoys attacking my insides.

The bacterium was only discovered to cause gastric ulcers by Barry Marshall and Robin Warren in 1983, which led to a Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 2005. H. pylori has even classified as a class 1 carcinogenic bacteria.

Inversely, H. pylori may have a beneficial effect associated with some ailments such as gastroesophageal reflux disease, Crohn's disease, and inflammatory bowel disease. The associations between bacteria, your gut, and the effect on your overall health is widely understudied.

In "Helicobacter pylori infection: Beyond gastric manifestations," published in 2020, the paper states that "although the mechanisms involved in IBD genesis are broadly studied, they are not well understood and may include genetic, immune, and environmental interactions."

I can put H. pylori publcily on blast and say that they are nasty little things that are causing havoc to my body, but the same bacterium in someone else may be benefitting them.

Ok Thomas, gross. Why are you rambling about your organs?

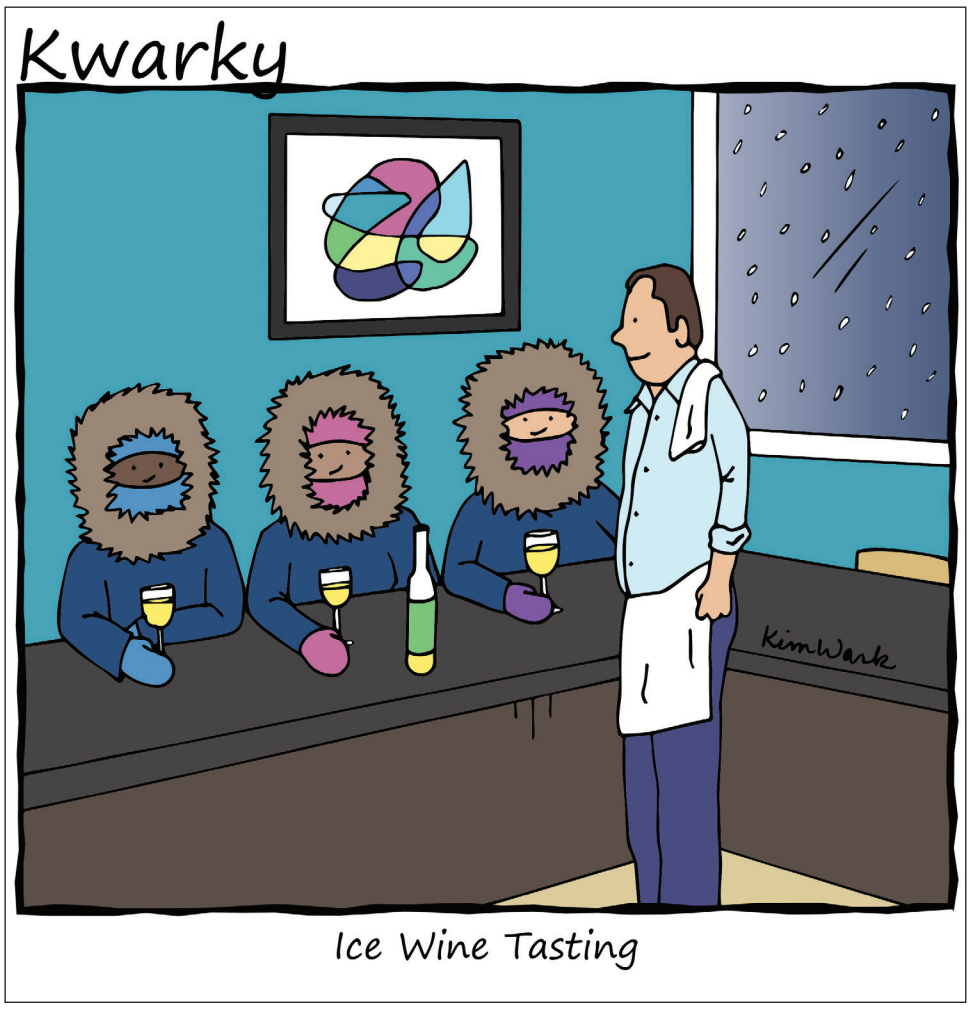
THOMAS SMITH
Editor

If you are like me or my friends, I was spending hundreds of dollars on antacids and famatodines such as Tums and Pepcid. I began to need more and more of these over-the-counter remedies to cease my acid reflux. Even after getting a PPI blocker prescription that would reduce the acidity of the acid in my stomach, I would be in pain each night. No matter what I ate, how little, or just drank water, my throat would burn.

Now begins my battle against this infection, with three different antibiotic medications that I need to take five pills for, twice daily. So every morning, I get to have a delicious assortment of pills for breakfast before I can even jam some toast in me.

If you are like me and suffered with daily reflux, it may just be that you have a colony of H. pylori in your system that just isn't benefitting you. It is time to break up with them.

Or maybe lay off on the Flamin' Hot Cheetos for a day or two.



Ice Wine Tasting

Bringing the heat

NOW THAT the rifle season for deer has ended, all that's left is the bow, black powder, and controlled hunt shotgun seasons for deer, depending on where you go. Of course, all these opportunities hinge on whether you still have a tag in your pocket or know some kind soul who is willing to share theirs with you in a party hunt. If not, the hunter can always spent time outdoors enjoying the last few weeks of the small game season or participate in big water or field hunts for waterfowl.

The only thing these things have in common is cold weather. December in the woods or on the water can be frigid. So, if you want to take advantage of these opportunities, you should know how to deal with cold weather.

STEVE GALEA
Beyond 35

Most people naturally assume that this means dressing for the conditions. They seem to think that just wearing layers of clothes is sufficient enough to block the wind and keep you warm and dry.

Frankly, that's amateur hour.

The real test of a late season hunter is how good he or she is at using the cold-deterring gifts our bodies come equipped with.

Shivering is one of those. It is the body's way of creating heat – and several new dance moves.

Not to brag, but I happen to one of Ontario's most renowned practitioners when it comes to the fine art of shivering.

This is something that I learned and perfected as a youth, after I developed a knack, while setting out decoys, for stepping at that one spot in the late-season marsh that is three feet deeper than all the others.

That's when I developed my only decent proverb: If you step in over your collar, it doesn't matter if your waders don't leak.

In any case, years of getting soaked in a late season marsh taught me to perfect my shivering technique to, frankly, a world class level. My shivering game is so good that people often assume I keep an electric toothbrush in my all my coat pockets – until they see me smile. My chattering teeth have made me an orthodontist's dream.

On a good day shivering, I can create so much friction between my skin and inner layer of clothing that, with the addition of tinder, I could conceivably start a small fire. Admittedly, this is not something you want to do in your underwear – especially if they are still reverberating from the impact of last night's beans.

Which leads me to the next great defense that our body provides against the cold– gas. Though marketing etiquette prevents it from being said, this is the real reason why windproof clothing is so effective. It's not to keep the cold wind out so much as to keep the warm winds in. My only recommendation on this eat the spicy food at breakfast and take your windproof pants off in the garage after a day afield.

Lastly, I would suggest that if you get too cold, take heed and remedy the situation by doing jumping jacks – hopefully, after you've already limited out on ducks and a big flock is coming in on your hunting buddy, who hasn't.

This will ensure you've won whatever bet you made. Better still, the ensuing chase will get you both warmed right up. So will the heated discussion that will follow on the long drive home.

InOtherWords

Columns and Letters to the Editor

Rootedness

FAY MARTIN
Poke, Peel, Pair, Ponder

I PERSONALLY believe that this earth will be rescued from the error of its ways if and only if we embrace the Indigenous view of all components of the earth as family, including the inert (as far as we know) bits.

And that means that we need to increase our sense of engagement with the land on which we live. The wisdom of an un-named Indigenous Elder that Jane Philpott cites in her book (*Health for All*) sticks in my mind: that the four L's essential to health were land, language, lineage and loved ones. I am envious of the Indigenous practice of introducing themselves by name, community, clan and sometimes spirit name, often in their own language and translated. I wish that I could be so clear about my roots. I wish that my forbears had welcomed my birth and celebrated my adolescence with a few naming clues about what my purpose in life was to be.

I say that, but then I remember how many times and how many ways I rejected the pathway that others predicted for me. They said I had to choose between having a career (which meant meaningful work) and having a family. They said I could be a nurse, a teacher or a secretary. They said I should get as much education as would be helpful to my husband. (My father, an otherwise lovely man, took me aside when I planned to return to university to get a Masters of Social Work degree in order to bring a semblance of expertise to the social work job I was doing. He suggested, kindly, lovingly, that I would educate myself out of marriageability. To prove him wrong – hmm, there may have been other factors at play as well, including escaping the terrible fate of spinsterhood if I hadn't captured a man before I turned 25 – I got my MRS a few months before I got my MSW. That marriage didn't wear well, but I think socialization rather than education was the culprit.)

Clearly I value my independence, my freedom to find my own way in life, complete with mundane and spectacular screw-ups. But also the heady feeling of owning my life, the responsibility of fulfilling the purpose for which I was placed on earth even when I'm not sure what it is. Especially when I'm not sure what it is.

But the connection to land, language, lineage and loved ones: that remains resonant. Even though I've moved a million times. Even though I am not geographically or psychologically close to many of my clan, including my children who have exercised their independence much as I exercised mine. Even though most of my extended family have only the faintest idea of who I am and what makes me me, and I could say the same of them.

In the current spate of publishing (that relate to this theme), there are two streams: one is an overdue honoring of the Indigenous story, and the other is the newer narratives of immigration. They are two sides to the same coin: one is of a homeland stolen and the other of a homeland abandoned. In both cases there is external coercion, even for those who felt they had choice (e.g., the immigrants who came 'for a better life': were they pushed or did they jump?). In both genres, there is a search to bridge the past with the present, to reclaim the language, to explore the lineage, to discover the loved ones. In both cases, there is a need to revisit the land, almost always called 'home' even if it's the first time the writer has set foot on it.

Where does that leave us settled settlers? Those of us who are born-'n-bred Canadians. Do we need to find land, language, lineage and loved ones if we don't think we've ever lost them?

I think we do. I think that to take for granted that this is our land, our language, and our lineage is in contravention of our role in Truth and Reconciliation. We need to dig deep into the treasure trove (and dung heap) in which our past resides if we're going to figure out who our loved ones are, what history we own, what words we use, how we coexist with the land on which we live. The circle we draw can be big or small, but draw a circle we must, and own it, if we are to survive physically and spiritually the challenges that are looming. The Truth is more than what we did to our Indigenous Peoples; it's also what we did – and are doing – to our Mother Earth.

This land is our land – not for ownership (we should know by now that that is not possible) but for stewardship. Happy rooting.

Minden Memories

Before cars were common a horse pulled cart was used to get children to school. This one was made and used by John Hulbig. /Photo courtesy of the Minden Hills Cultural Centre

letters to the editor

Sincerest thanks to hospital

To the Editor:

When my alarm clock went off on Friday, Nov. 8, I thought this day would be like most others. How wrong I was when my wife Joan said she wanted to go to the Haliburton Hospital! I asked what was wrong and she replied with chest and back pain.

I said okay and before I was dressed she said please just dial 911. It became really serious when the ambulance was dispatched and arrived very quickly in our driveway. The paramedics attended to Joan and she was Haliburton bound within about ten minutes. The Algonquin Fire Department was also on hand with reassuring suggestions, very much appreciated.

I arrived in Haliburton a few minutes after the ambulance and was taken in by the security guard and a nurse told me it really looked like a heart attack.

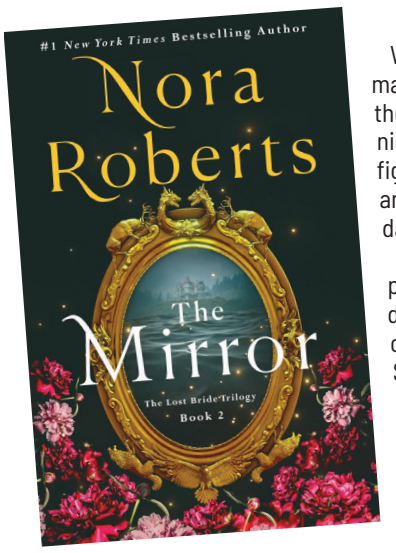
A doctor told us Joan would be transported to Peterborough Hospital as soon as possible and around 11 a.m. they left Haliburton.

I was informed that an operation would likely take place in the early evening and the hospital would call me. To my surprise Joan called me and said there were patients ahead of her but that the hospital would call when they were finished. True to form they did call and said she now has three stents in one artery and is in recovery.

Such wonderful care from doctors, nurses, and paramedics is just incredible and all in one day from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. How fortunate we are to live in such a great county. Our sincere thanks to everyone involved.

Bob Mann,
Algonquin Highlands

HCPL's Book of the Week



When Sonya MacTavish inherits the huge Victorian mansion on the coast of Maine, she has no idea that the house is haunted. The footsteps she hears at night, the doors slamming, the music playing, are not figments of her imagination. When she has visions of an antique mirror, she is drawn to it, sensing it holds dark family secrets.

One night, she steps through the mirror into the past, witnessing a bride's murder on her wedding day, her ring torn from her finger. Trapped in a centuries-old curse that repeats this tragic scene, Sonya must solve this puzzle if there is any hope of breaking the curse.

The Mirror by Nora Roberts is available to borrow from the Haliburton County Public Library.

Shining at the Shindig

by **EMILY STONEHOUSE**
Times Staff

It's that time of year again. Many locals plan their holiday season around the long-awaited Highlands Christmas Shindig, set for Saturday, Nov. 30 this year at the Haliburton Legion.

Now in its 11th year, the Shindig is in support of Fuel for Warmth, which directly benefits the many families and individuals in Haliburton County who struggle with keeping their heat on over the winter months. "We're not just fundraising," said executive director for the organization, Sue Waite, "we're really trying to help people."

The Shindig came to fruition many years ago as the brainchild of Mike Jaycock and the late Lorraine McNeil, who co-hosted a show together on Canoe FM, and created characters to perform at the Shindig for the wonder and amusement of giggling crowds.

Their personalities captured the hearts and minds of locals during the holiday season, and as the years went on, the Shindig continued to grow, each year raising more money than the last.

They didn't even take a break during the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced them to change gears, and offer the programming virtually, which had viewers tuning in near and far, and funds continuing to be raised.

Yet, like many local events, the programming needed to evolve and grow in order to build their audience. This was when producer Drew Allen stepped into the role.

"There was talk two years ago that the Shindig would die," he said. "And I thought, I don't want this to die, this thing is fantastic."

Allen remodeled the program, and shifted it from being a pantomime show with multiple acts, to a single act with one well-known band. The energy and enthusiasm behind the cause is still alive and well, just with a slight tweak to the programming. "We want to give people in the Highlands a fun night before Christmas," said Allen. "It's just supposed to be a really fun evening."

Last year, through the funds raised, Fuel for Warmth was able to help 62 families with accessing heat, and delivered 31 loads of firewood. "It's extremely gratifying," said Waite. "It's nice to be able to say we help. It's very humbling for me."

This year's band is Ragged Company, which Allen believes "will have people up and dancing by the first song." The well-known hosts of the event, Amy Brohm and Victoria Bingham, will be back and quirky as ever, with many audience members attending just to join in on their fun.

While funds are raised through ticket sales and raffles at the event itself, much of the fundraising happens leading up to it, through corporate sponsorships. "We have a really, really generous community here in Haliburton," noted Waite, when referencing the many businesses across the county that contribute to the cause.

Beyond their fundraising efforts, Waite and Allen hope the Shindig will simply get the word out that the organization exists, and that they are readily available for anyone who may need a helping hand this year. "We are here to help people," said Waite. "It's heartbreaking to hear some of these stories."

Tickets for the Highlands Christmas Shindig are available via Eventbrite, or at the door on the evening of Nov. 30. Doors open at 6:30 p.m., with the band starting at 7:30 p.m.

If you or someone you know may benefit from the assistance of Fuel for Warmth, contact Sue Waite at 705-854-9208.

Christmas at the landfill

Scotch Line Landfill has already been decorated for Christmas. From Santa to snowmen, the landfill is already in the holiday spirit. /Photo by GUENTER HORST

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Haliburton Highlands Land Trust's 2024 Holiday Auction
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Our Lady of Fatima Christmas Luncheon
When: Friday, Nov. 29
Where: 7 Bobcaygeon Rd, Minden
Enjoy soup, sandwiches, coffee and tea and Santa squares. By donation

Holiday Craft Sale
When: Saturday, Nov. 30, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Where: Lloyd Watson Center, 2249 Loop Rd, Wilberforce
Our many venders will be selling great things, including Christmas items, gifts and baked goods. Lunch will be available. Contact: Barb Schofield, 705-448-2598, Wilberforcebarb@yahoo.ca

Highlands Festival Singers Present: "We Wish You A Merry Christmas"
When: Sunday, Dec. 1, 3 p.m. and Tuesday, Dec 3 at 7 p.m.
Where: Haliburton United Churc
10 George Street, Haliburton
Featuring stunning arrangements by the legendary John Rutter and the vibrant harmonies of Pentatonix, this concert promises to warm your heart and get you into the holiday spirit. Perfect for the whole family! Tickets are $20 General Admission with special pricing for children, youth, and families, call 705-457-4916. Available at Master's Book Store, Haliburton, Minden Pharmasave, Minden, or 705-457-4916

Christmas Open House
When: Saturday Dec. 7, 7 to 9 p.m.
Where: Red Cross Outpost Historic House, 2314 Loop Rd, Wilberforce
Come and join us for good cheer, seasonal goodies and hot apple cider. Contact: Barb Schofield, 705-448-2598, wilberforcebarb@yahoo.ca

Recurring events

Cards/Euchre/Cribbage
When: Thursdays at 2:30 p.m.
Where: St. George's Church
617 Mountain Street

Lakeside Church Service
When: Sunday at 9 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.
Where: 9 Park Street, Haliburton.
Whoever you are, wherever you've been, you are welcome here.

Weekly Meat Rolls
When: Every Saturday, 3 p.m.
Where: Coboconk Legion, Hwy 48 and 35
Join us for our weekly meat draw at the Coboconk Legion. Five spins for $10. The first four rounds are for highest and lowest score with two winners per round. The last round is for a prepare-it-yourself dinner for two. Additional spins for this round are available for $2 each. Call 705-454-8127 or email info@coboconklegion.ca for more information.

Survey IDs key pieces of public health service

by JAMES MATTHEWS
Times Staff

When you pledge to improve customer experience, the best way to get indication of effectiveness is to go straight to the public you serve.

And that's what the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit has done.

Fiona Kelly, the health unit's foundational standards director and chief nursing officer, said public health's latest initiative related to its customer experience pledge is a critical component. And that is a survey undertaken to garner feedback toward enhancing service quality.

"The survey helps us to lay a foundation on which we can begin to identify opportunities to improve and prepare to measure and monitor the experience of our customers," she said.

At the heart of this initiative lies the survey, designed to gather feedback aligned with seven core promises outlined in the pledge. The survey provides invaluable insights into the experiences of individuals who have utilized the health unit's programs and services.

In July, 161 surveys were started and 97 were completed. The survey can be accessed from the HKPR website.

"This is pretty common with public surveys," said Kelly. "Some people just like to go through a survey, see what it's all about, see what's pertinent to them. They don't necessarily complete it."

Fifty per cent of completed surveys dealt with sexual health. Immunizations and vaccines were interacted by 22 per cent, while six per cent of surveys interacted with infectious diseases. Four per cent of respondents cited food and water safety and phone support for families as concerns. Three per cent of the surveys interacted with health equity and climate change.

"That was interesting information for us to gather," Kelly said.

Between 70 and 77 per cent of respondents indicated such things as satisfaction with their experience, with the information and assistance they received, and that they understood that information.

Through the pledge, the public health unit endeavours to treat people courteously and respectfully and to work with them to best meet their needs. People can expect a timely response with health information that is easy to understand.

The unit ensures its programs and services are as inclusive and accessible as possible and it will make improvements based on public feedback received.

Public input by way of the survey helped "identify what people believe are the key pieces that should be incorporated in a customer experience standard, a comprehensive standard for the organization but also a forward facing pledge to our public," Kelly said. The pledge is a promise to clients, community partners, and the public that will be the cornerstone for how staff at the district health unit strive to respect and engage with clients.

While the survey primarily focuses on improving experience, it's important to note that it is anonymous, so the HKPR District Health Unit will not follow-up with you regarding your responses and feedback.

Feedback gathered will be used to improve program and service quality.

"We are dedicated to ensuring that every interaction with the HKPR District Health Unit is positive and impactful," said Kelly. "The programs and services experience survey is instrumental in helping us understand our strengths and pinpoint areas for improvement, ultimately allowing us to better serve our diverse community."

Celebrating success

Haliburton Highlands Secondary School held their annual undergraduate awards on Thursday, Nov. 21 at the school. The program, which was traditionally held around Thanksgiving, has been shifted to focus on the academic accomplishments of those in Grades 9 to 11 this past year. Grade 12 students were recognized at their graduation ceremony this past June. In total, $6,720 in scholarships was given out to undergraduate students who have excelled in their respective subjects and initiatives throughout the school year. "The support from the community is amazing," said chair of the awards committee, Melissa Stephens, noting that the scholarships are made possible by individual and community-based financial contributions. Pictured, the undergraduate award winners recognized at the ceremony. /EMILY STONEHOUSE Staff

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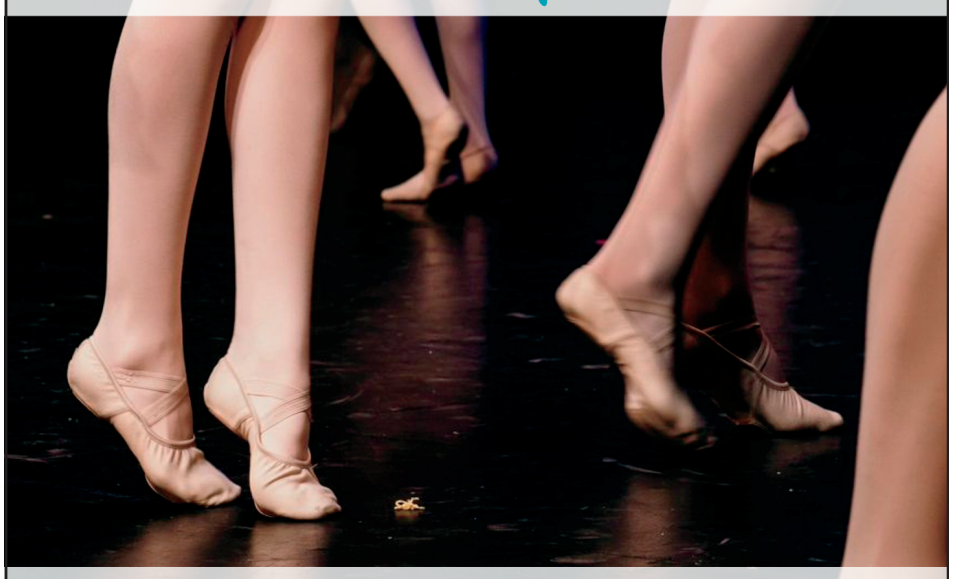

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HHSS brings Ancient Greece to life

by **EMILY STONEHOUSE**
Times Staff

The future looks bright for the next generation of theatre students.

Haliburton Highlands Secondary School (HHSS) will be presenting their annual performance this week, titled *Circus Olympus*, at the Northern Lights Performing Arts Pavilion.

"The show is like if you went to a circus, but instead of elephants and peanuts, you get Zeus and Demeter," said the director of the play, Veronica Beynon.

Beynon is a student at HHSS, and is currently completing Grade 13 before hoping to get into the world of animation through Sheridan College. She's got a fiery passion for theatre and the arts. "I think that directing the play is a good segue to the entertainment industry," she said.

The show itself is put on by the senior drama class, with a handful of interested juniors also participating both on and off stage. Beynon chose the play based on the variety of roles available to the students. "I was looking for something not too cringey for high school students," she noted, "but also something that incorporates comedy. *Circus Olympus* is a nicely packed array of stories."

The premise of the show is centred around five different storytellers, deemed the "Greek Geeks", who take the audience on a journey through the many storylines of Ancient Greece, though with the quirky and comedic undertones of the circus.

"We've done *Romeo and Juliet*, we've done *Grease*," said Beynon, "so we wanted to do something totally different this time."

The HHSS senior drama class has been hard at work putting together their version of *Circus Olympus*, a new-age retelling of some classic Greek myths. The show kicks off this week. /Photo submitted

While Beynon is confident on-stage, finding her footing in her directorial debut and confidently leading the team, Kendra Korpela likes to stay in the shadows behind the scenes.

Korpela is the play's stage manager, and brings wisdom and experience to the role. "I've been interested in theatre for three years now," she said, "and it's my role to smooth out all the little bumps."

The Grade 11 student has been involved with various Ctrl-ART-Del performances; a theatre troupe in the Haliburton Highlands that is dedicated to nurturing the love of theatre for the youth of the community. Korpela noted that Ella Leis, a seasoned stage manager with the organization, has provided support and guidance to the student, and she credits much of her knowledge to Leis's direction.

As a result, Korpela runs a tight ship backstage. "Kendra is really amazing," said drama teacher Meghan Mardus, who is facilitating the steps taken with the performance. "She is always one step ahead of whatever we need. She really understands the magic of theatre."

Mardus says that watching the play take shape this year has been a real treat. "I love how much student leadership is happening in this show," she noted.

In past years, many of the drama students have gravitated to the on-stage portion of performing, with much of the tech components falling on the teachers.

But this year, Mardus has incorporated tech training into the drama program at HHSS, and as a result, she's seen many of the students thrive in the backstage world of theatre. "I'm having so much fun," she said. "It's really just magic to see it all come together."

This week, the cast and crew will be running their tech week, where Beynon and Korpela will be working diligently to fine tune the performance, before their opening night on Nov. 28. The show will run again on Nov. 29 for students at JDH through the day, followed by an evening performance, before closing their run on Saturday, Nov. 30.

Any funds raised from the performances will go directly into their school trip to perform at the Star Festival at Sheridan College in December. "We want to make that trip available and accessible to all the students involved," said Mardus, noting that the opportunity to perform in front of adjudicators at the festival, plus watching and experiencing theatre in new locations, can be directly beneficial to all students.

Tickets for the show will be available at the door on the night of the performances. Show starts at 6:30 p.m. "I feel proud to say I've directed this," said Beynon, referencing the group, and how far they have come. "I know they're going to blow it out of the water."

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Artistic Producer ~

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The summer season opens with the satirical but a little off-the-wall musical, ***Urinetown***. It all starts with the sixteenth letter of the alphabet, P. The letter which speaks for itself or, when spelled out, pee, is the central theme to this fast-paced musical. Urinetown is a metaphor for the over-arching intrusion of big corporations into all aspects of our lives as the plucky citizens fight back. With music and lyrics by Mark Hollmann, and book and lyrics by Greg Kotis, the cast makes its case against the legal system, capitalism, social irresponsibility, populism, bureaucracy, corporate mismanagement, and municipal politics with music, humour, and boycotts even as several love stories emerge from the mayhem.
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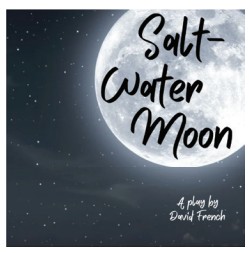

For our third show, we turn to the production which opened the Festival 25 years ago, the award-winning ***Salt-Water Moon***. We chose this quintessential Canadian play by David French to kick off the inaugural HSF season. Set in Newfoundland eight years after the end of the First World War, this is a touching love story with the conflicted young lovers over-lain by the memory of the horrors of the war, changing roles for women in society and technological advances. The story of Salt-Water Moon resonates as strongly today as it did when we first presented it on our stage in the summer of 2000.
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Accusations, mistaken identities, and romances run wild in this traditional, laugh-out-loud farce, ***Drinking Habits***. Two nuns at the Sisters of Perpetual Sewing have been secretly making wine to keep the convent's doors open, but Paul and Sally, reporters and former fiancées, are hot on their trail. They go undercover as a nun and priest, but their presence, combined with the addition of a new nun, spurs paranoia throughout the convent that spies have been sent from Rome to shut them down. Drinking Habits, by Tom Smith: wine and secrets are inevitably spilled as everyone tries to preserve the convent and reconnect with lost loves. (This production contains mature themes. Recommended for ages 13 and up. There is no official rating system for live theatre. We encourage you to use your judgment based on your child's age and maturity level.)
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After spending days with excruciating back pain, Owen decided it was time to visit the Haliburton Highlands Health Services emergency department. This set the wheels in motion for a three week journey he did not expect to take this September. He shared his grateful patient story with us.

Owen and the emergency doctor discussed the pain...was it a kidney stone, bladder stone, gallbladder? An ultrasound revealed a fuzzy lump in the bladder. Something that needed further investigation. Owen was sent home with pain medication, an appointment for another ultrasound and emphatically urged to see a urologist. Owen's family doctor stepped in with a urology referral, a visit to a cystoscopy clinic and finally surgery. It was determined that the mass was a cancerous tumour. Thankfully, the cancer cells are low grade and Owen's prognosis is good.

In his own words, he is thankful for "that little ER ultrasound" otherwise his bladder cancer would have gone undetected. Owen has committed to making an annual donation to the HHHS Foundation to show how grateful he and his family are for the timely, exceptional care he received. With upgraded tools and equipment, doctors in Haliburton County can make better and faster diagnoses for people like Owen.

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Crafting for Christmas

Jane Leavis, left, of Sunflower Stitchery shows off her handmade goods at the Stanhope Artisan Market held on Saturday, Nov. 30. Natalia Brown of Naebr Design, below shows off an assortment of printing cards and bookmarks. /THOMAS SMITH Staff

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Workers seeking a fair deal

by **EMILY STONEHOUSE**
Times Staff

There's a cold sleet falling from the skies at the end of November, with the countdown to Christmas hovering around the one month mark. What's normally a time where the local post offices are at their jolliest and most festive, this year, there's a different energy to the community hub. As of Friday, Nov. 15, 55,000 Canada Post workers went on strike, including the many that tie our communities together in Haliburton County. "Everybody is really upset about it," said Kelly Lawr, who works with the Haliburton branch, "but we had to do it at a time that there's an impact." At the time of press, the strike is ongoing, as tensions continue to rise.

On top of the gaps that the pause in postal services has presented leading up to the holidays, others picketing out the front of the office in Haliburton noted that their contract ended at the end of November, leaving them without pay or benefits while they are striking.

The crux of the strike, according to the workers in Haliburton, lies on living wage pay and access to benefits. The union is seeking a 24 per cent wage increase, to keep up with cost of living, as well as the multiple minimum wage increases that have taken place over the years that the Crown corporation has not honoured. Canada Post has counter-offered an 11.5 per cent increase, which is far from the request; resulting in the strike continuing with no end in sight.

"Our demands are reasonable: fair wages, safe working conditions, the right to retire with dignity and the expansion of services at the public post office," reads the official statement from the union of postal workers.

The Haliburton workers were quick to add that the corporation is trying to implement unfair starting pay and expectations for new workers with the postal service, and the current employees won't stand for it. "We're trying to fight for the new people," said Lawr. "Otherwise, it creates such a divide between workers."

Jackie Saik, the owner of the online store Made For The Lake apparel and goods, took to Instagram last Tuesday, when it became clear that the strike was far from over. "Small businesses are still shipping," she pleaded in the post. "Please don't give up on them!"

Saik largely relies on Canada Post to ship her products across the country, and with the ongoing strike and the holidays on the horizon, Saik is concerned about what this could mean for her livelihood. "I made the post out of desperation," she told the *Times*, "sales were nowhere close to where they need to be for this time of year."

The business owner went on to clarify that her frustrations do not lie with those currently striking, rather, she is airing her grievances towards Canada Post as a corporation. "I have nothing against the workers or their right to strike," she noted. "But

> "Our economy and small businesses cannot afford another week of postal disruption.
>
> — Corinne Pohlmann,
> Executive Vice–President of Advocacy at CFIB

I cannot pause my entire business to show support. It is not an option for me. I am doing what is best for my business to hopefully continue on."

After years of uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, Saik said that herself and many other online businesses were depending on this time of year to carry them through the quieter months ahead. "I was personally counting on this month to be something that would really help me," she said. "The business from the holidays is what gets us through January and February."

Saik noted that while it's slightly more complicated, she has figured out a way to sell items from her online shop via UPS, but she is unable to send to letter boxes or card mail until the strike is resolved.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB), Canada's largest association of small business owners across the country, released a formal statement in light of the strike. They have made a public plea to the federal government to step into the dispute, and put an end to the strike before more small businesses are impacted. "We hope the parties quickly reach a deal through collective bargaining, but reports say they're still 'far apart.' Our economy and small businesses cannot afford another week of postal disruption," said Corinne Pohlmann, Executive Vice-President of Advocacy at CFIB. "Small businesses, especially those in rural areas, are already losing on sales and missing payments, and they have to rethink delivery strategies on the eve of the busy holiday season."

According to CFIB, over three quarters of small businesses in rural communities rely on Canada Post, and will be directly impacted by the work stoppage at this time.

"We feel bad for our customers," said Lawr, noting that she and her colleagues miss their regular routes, and the familiar faces they have become accustomed to over the years, but they won't budge until a fair offer is presented by the Crown corporation. "They're trying to implement a 'one size fits all' approach across the board," she said. "But it's not a 'one size fits all' solution."

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Council looks to repair historic log chute

by JAMES MATTHEWS
Times Staff

The Big Hawk Lake Log Chute in Algonquin Highlands has deteriorated since it was last rebuilt in 2005.

Bob Mills owns property on Halls Lake in Algonquin Highlands. He lobbied township council to rebuild the structure as it's an important part of local lore and heritage.

The first chute was built in 1861 where Big Hawk Lake meets the Kennisis River. And there's been one at the site since then. They were wooden troughs used back in the day in logging operations to shuttle logs to sawmills.

The Hawk Lake Log Chute is believed to be the last one in Ontario.

According to the township's website: "This historic site is a testament to the tenacity and perseverance of the tens of thousands of men who made their living in the logging industry, and whose courage helped forged the communities of rural Ontario."

Mills said in his letter to township council that the structure's current state is a disaster and there's likely only a short time left before it will be completely washed away.

"There has been no progress or change in any timelines or movement towards a replacement of the log chute as of yet," said Chris Card, the township's parks, recreation, and trails manager.

Mayor Liz Danielsen said the log chute has been at the fore for quite some time. She said the log chute has become increasingly damaged with each year.

"I'll be surprised if after high water next spring any of it remains," she said.

The Hawk Lake Log Chute was badly damaged by heavy water flows during flooding in May 2017. /FILE

Within the next year or two, work will be done on a nearby dam as part of work on the Trent-Severn Waterway, she said. And the popular log chute should also get some attention.

"In my estimation, this is a really important piece of infrastructure," Danielsen said. "It's extremely popular."

She recommended that the chute and the engineering required to remediate the damage be discussed by the projects and priorities committee of council.

"You can see that there's definitely some damage on the dam," she said. "There's some work that will need to be done there and I want us to be ready to do anything should there be work done on the dam."

Mills also expressed concern about the dam's condition.

"There's a breach low down in the concrete foundation of the dam itself that needs to be inspected," he wrote. "During the high water flow (in) early July, water was spewing through what appeared to be an estimated eight to 10 inch hole on the concrete face just before the chute structure."

"In previous years our hands have been tied on this project," Deputy Mayor Jennifer Dailloux said.

The township awaited work to be completed by the crowd responsible for the Trent-Severn Waterway. Another matter that tied council's hands was related to insurance.

"I wonder where we are on any of that," Dailloux said. "Might that be resolved before the log chute washes away? Because it isn't by any dearth of interest on the part of council for the last many years."

Angie Bird, the township's CAO, said awaiting on repairs to the dam has stymied the township taking part in the chute's rehabilitation.

"The issue of insurance was resolved," Bird said. "It was a number of years ago now. It will need to be engineered in order to be an insured structure."

Danielsen said all she's suggesting is the chute's needs be included among the other items when council discusses its priorities and projects.

"I'm hoping we can set aside funding for engineering," Danielsen said. "As to funding repairs or actual reconstruction of the log chute, that's another matter indeed. "We'll have a better idea once some engineering has been done."

And, she said, fundraising opportunities and possible government assistance needs to be investigated.

"But I don't believe we can let this go much longer," the mayor said.

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Showing care to our departed

Supervisor of Parks, Recreation, and Cemeteries John Daignault and Director of Community Services Candace McGuigan conducted a sweep of 12 Mile Lake Cemetery on Monday. Dangerous items like glass and decayed wreaths were removed with families being notified. /THOMAS SMITH Staff

COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS PUBLIC SURVEY

Are you a resident of Kawartha Lakes or Haliburton County?

The Kawartha Lakes Haliburton Ontario Health Team is a collaboration of health and social care providers working to improve health access and outcomes in our community and wants to hear from you!

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Notice
Tariff of Fees

Notice is hereby provided that the Council of the County of Haliburton will be reviewing and considering amendments to the Tariff of Fees By-law-4145 at the Council Meeting to be held on December 11, 2024. The agenda for the above noted meeting date can be viewed online at http://haliburton.civicweb.net Meeting to commence at 9:00 a.m.

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8	7	4	2	1	5	3	9	6
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Boreal Releases new song and video, *Shepherd of the Road*

Boreal, the celebrated Canadian folk trio featuring Guelph's Tannis Slimmon, Katherine Wheatley, and Orillia's Angie Nussey, is making waves with the release of their new single and video, *Shepherd of the Road*. The song, which tells the story of a truck driver who helped lead Angie home during a "white knuckle" drive through a snowstorm, marks the band's first single since 2022. Inspired by a real-life experience, this heartfelt tribute to the kindness of strangers has quickly become a fan favourite.

Shepherd of the Road is the first track on the album *Winterbirds*, the long-overdue follow-up to the trio's 2014 debut album *Winter's Welcome*. *Winterbirds* is produced by Angie, Tannis, and Katherine and features musicians Lewis Melville, Sam Cino, Brian Kobayakawa and Tyler Wagler. It has been over a year in the making. While a chilly theme is still predominant on many of the songs, it's a collection that's intended to bring joy year-round. The music presents a balance of soulful intensity and beautiful storytelling.

Join Boreal on Friday, Nov. 29 at the Highland Hills United Church in Minden for an intimate, soul-lifting live performance. Fans can expect a memorable evening of exquisite harmonies, laughter, and a sneak peek at the new album, which will be available for purchase at the show.

Boreal's distinctive blend of ethereal vocals and earthy depth offers a refreshingly unique take on Canadian folk music. With a live performance that promises joy, reflection, and the unbreakable bond between the band and their audience, *Winterbirds* is set to be an album that fans have long been waiting for. Boreal was formed by the powerful songwriting trio of Tannis Slimmon, Katherine Wheatley, and Angie Nussey. Together, they create a sound that draws on their individual strengths to bring warmth, depth, and soul to Canadian folk music. The trio's chemistry both on stage and in the studio is undeniable, and they're known for their joyful, intimate live performances that connect deeply with their audience.

Tickets are available at www.abbeygardens.ca

Submitted

Feds pick up slack in senior dental care

by **JAMES MATTHEWS**
Times Staff

The Haliburton County agency that delivers seniors' dental care with the local public health unit will end its service agreement in January.

Dr. Natalie Bocking, the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit's medical officer and CEO, told the health board Nov. 21 that increased clients in a federal dental program for seniors has caused a drop in clients to the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program (OSDCP).

"The clients they are seeing are now accessing that service through other dental care providers through the federal program," Bocking said. "So it does not result in any recipients or clients losing service."

The province established its seniors' dental care program in 2019 and charged public health units with its delivery in collaboration with community health centres (CHC) and Aboriginal Health Access Centres.

If health units were to partner with external agencies, there was a need to draft service level agreements (SLAs) to ensure clear and consistent communication for the delivery of the program, funding, and reporting requirements.

Since the HKPR unit didn't have a CHC in the north, Bocking said a unique partnership with Volunteer Dental Outreach of Haliburton (VDO) was explored.

"This program has been successfully implemented across the three sites since 2019 and recently the sites have seen changes related to the new federally funded Canadian Dental Care Program (CDPC)," according to a briefing note distributed to the unit's board.

"The changes are positive in that more clients are enrolling in the CDPC program and sites offering OSDCP are seeing decreased enrollment in the program."

And that's why VDO intends to end delivery of the seniors' program in January.

Seniors can be seen by participating dental providers for treatment through the federal program and, as such, the VDO wants to avoid taking away patients from those practices.

There are two dental practices in Haliburton Village, less than a five-minute drive from the VDO clinic, who are listed on the CDCP dental provider search tool, as accepting clients on this program.

Bocking said the VDO stated that they are helping clients sign up for CDCP and has confirmed that legally all clients rostered with them will continue to receive services by VDO and will not be turned away.

"I anticipate that the provincial program will continue to review their numbers given across the province people are accessing the federal program first and then the provincial one," Bocking said.

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Answers on page 17

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Believe in magic over the holidays

The 2024 Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation's Believe in the Magic of Giving Holiday campaign kicks off this week as the holiday spirit warms Haliburton County. This annual drive supports the four pillars of the HHHS Foundation's mission: subsidies for Community Support Services, education grants for health care workers, capital purchases and improvements in long-term care facilities.

Fundraising through the annual Holiday giving campaign is an opportunity to connect with donors and share the heartwarming impact of each gift. This year, grateful patient, Owen, shared his story about how "that little ER ultrasound" sent him on a health journey that thankfully had a positive outcome. Owen committed to making an annual donation to show his gratitude and you can read the full story online at hhhs.ca/foundation.

Donations can be made:

• Online at hhhs.ca/foundation

• In person at the HHHS Foundation office located just inside the main entrance of the HHHS site, 7199 Gelert Road, Haliburton

• In person at the HHHS Minden Site Business Office, 6 McPherson Street, Minden

• After hours drop off in the donation box beside the HHHS Foundation Office entrance

• Or by calling 705-457-1580 during office hours (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday)

Believe in the Magic of Giving donation forms are included in Haliburton County newspapers through the month of December and the campaign continues to Jan. 12, 2025.

The tradition of adding a new huggable stuffie to the family of Foundation Bears continues ... our new fuzzy family member will be available for sale at local grocery stores and HHHS sites starting Nov. 29. Watch our social channels for more information.

And don't forget to get your 50/50 Lottery tickets for stocking stuffers, neighbourly gifts and friendly thank you gifts especially since this is a double month lottery! The lottery is running for two months, throughout November and December, giving you the chance to win big. Last year's jackpot was $11,300! If you get your tickets now, you'll be entered into both Early Bird Draws for $500 each. The Early Bird Draws will take place on Nov. 22 and Dec. 13 at 9 a.m.

For more information, call us at 705-457-1580 or email foundation@hhhs.ca.

The Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation is an incorporated registered Canadian charity that financially supports the hospital and health care facilities in Haliburton County for capital projects, equipment, education programs and community support services. Funds are raised through personal, business & corporate donations, special events, promotions, annual giving and a special gift program. The Foundation is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors that dedicates time and expertise to have better health care and hospital facilities. The Foundation does not provide funds for the operation of the facilities.

Submitted

CFUW vigil against gender-based violence

Friday Dec. 6 marks the anniversary of the 1989 senseless massacre of 14 young women studying to become engineers at École Polytechnique in Montreal. The CFUW Haliburton Highlands chapter will be holding a vigil in the Sculpture Forest on Dec. 6 beginning at 10:45 a.m.

Please join with us, everyone is welcome. We will meet at the Haliburton Highland Museum parking lot which extends from Bay Shore Road. at 10:30 a.m. where we will then proceed to the location in the forest. We will read the names of the women at 10:59 a.m. followed by a moment of silence and a commemorative song. Here we will place ribbons on a tree to honour those women who were killed.

The vigil is part of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence which began on Nov. 25 with International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and concludes Dec. 16, International Human Rights Day.

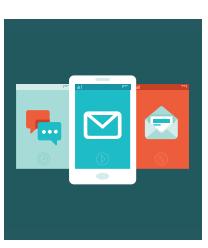
Dec. 6 is the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. In Canada, Indigenous women and girls, 2SLGBTQIA+, non-binary individuals, women with disabilities, newcomers and youth and those living in remote and rural communities are disproportionately impacted by gender-based violence.

We hope you will stand with us and wear a white ribbon to honour the 14 innocent women killed simply because they were women.

The vigil will take place on Dec. 6 at 10:45 a.m. Please meet at the Haliburton Highlands Museum Parking lot.

For further information please contact cfuw.hh@gmail.com

Submitted



Have a thought, comment or opinion you'd like to share?

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THE TOWNSHIP OF MINDEN HILLS
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COMMITTEE OF ADJUSTMENT - NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
Applications FOR Minor Variance

TAKE NOTICE THAT the Committee of Adjustment of the Township of Minden Hills will hold a Public Meeting on:

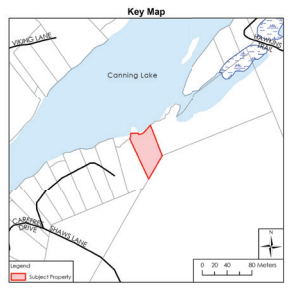
DATE: Monday, December 9, 2024
TIME: 9:30 AM
LOCATION: Hybrid Meeting (In-person and Electronic via Zoom)

Members of the public are welcome to watch the Committee of Adjustment meeting by joining YouTube at: https://www.youtube.com/@townshipofmindenhills4716

Members of the public wishing to participate and make comment/speak at the Public Hearing must pre-register by emailing dsisson@mindenhills.ca by **Friday, December 6 before 4:00 PM** or **by attending and registering the morning of the meeting before 9:00 AM.** Participants registering after 9:00 AM will not be permitted into the public hearing.

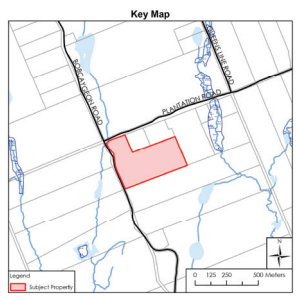
Please note the live-stream link provided for each hearing will only be activated while Committee of Adjustment is in session.

The purpose of the Public Meeting will be to consider proposed Minor Variance applications **PLMV2024068** and **PLMV2024069** to the Township of Minden Hills Zoning By-law pursuant to Section 45 of the Planning Act as follows:



PLMV2024068: Part of Lot 12 Concession 14, Geographic Township of Snowdon; located at 1345 Shaws Lane, Canning Lake (See Key Map).

Purpose and Effect of the Application: The purpose of the application is to provide relief from the Township of Minden Hills Zoning By-law 06-10, as amended, to permit the development of a 22.30 sq.m (240 sq.ft) addition to the southeast side of the existing cottage. The effect of the application would be to permit an increase in the size of a building located in part within 15 m (49.3 ft) of the highwater mark (HWM), where an increase in size or height of a building or structure within 15 m (49.3 ft) of the HWM is otherwise not permitted.



PLMV2024069: Part Lot 20, Concession A, Geographic Township of Minden; located at 1378 Bobcaygeon Road (see Key Map).

Purpose and Effect of the Application: The purpose of the application is to provide relief from the Township of Minden Hills Zoning By-law 06-10, as amended, to permit the enlargement of the dwelling and to construct a new two-storey addition with a side porch. The effect of the application would be to permit an increase of the ground floor area of the building beyond the permitted 25% for non-complying buildings or structures.

Additional information regarding this application is available online at www.mindenhills.ca/newsroom. A copy of the complete application will be available for public inspection at the Township of Minden Hills Building and Planning Department by appointment only.

Input on the above noted application is welcome and encouraged. You can provide your input, either in support or opposition to the proposed minor variance, by making a written submission to the Township or by speaking at the Public Hearing. If you do not attend the Public Hearing, it may proceed in your absence and, except as otherwise provided in the Planning Act, you will not be entitled to any further notice in the proceedings.

To provide input in writing, or to request written notice of the decision, please contact the undersigned or e-mail adougherty@mindenhills.ca.

Any person or agency who is of the opinion that holding the hearing as an electronic hearing is likely to cause them significant prejudice, may make a submission to the undersigned, and if the Committee is satisfied that holding the hearing as an electronic hearing is likely to cause the party significant prejudice then the hearing will be re-scheduled as an oral hearing. If a person or agency does not make a submission to the Secretary-Treasurer prior to the electronic hearing, and the person or agency does not participate in the hearing in accordance with this Notice, then the Committee may proceed without the party's participation and the party will not be entitled to any further notice in the proceeding.

If you are interested in participating in the hearing you are strongly encouraged to contact the undersigned prior to the meeting date with any questions you may have and/or to provide any material for the Committee's consideration at the hearing.

Accessibility: The Township of Minden Hills is committed to providing services as set out in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. If you have accessibility needs and require alternative formats or other accommodations, please contact the undersigned.

Privacy Disclosure: As one of the purposes of the Planning Act is to provide for planning processes that are open and accessible, all written submissions, documents, correspondence, e-mails or other communications (including your name and address) form part of the public record and may be disclosed/made available by the Township as deemed appropriate, including anyone requesting such information. Please note that by submitting any of this information, you are providing the Township with your consent to use and disclose this information as part of the planning process.

Amanda Dougherty
Manager of Planning Services
Township of Minden Hills
705-286-1260 x506
adougherty@mindenhills.ca

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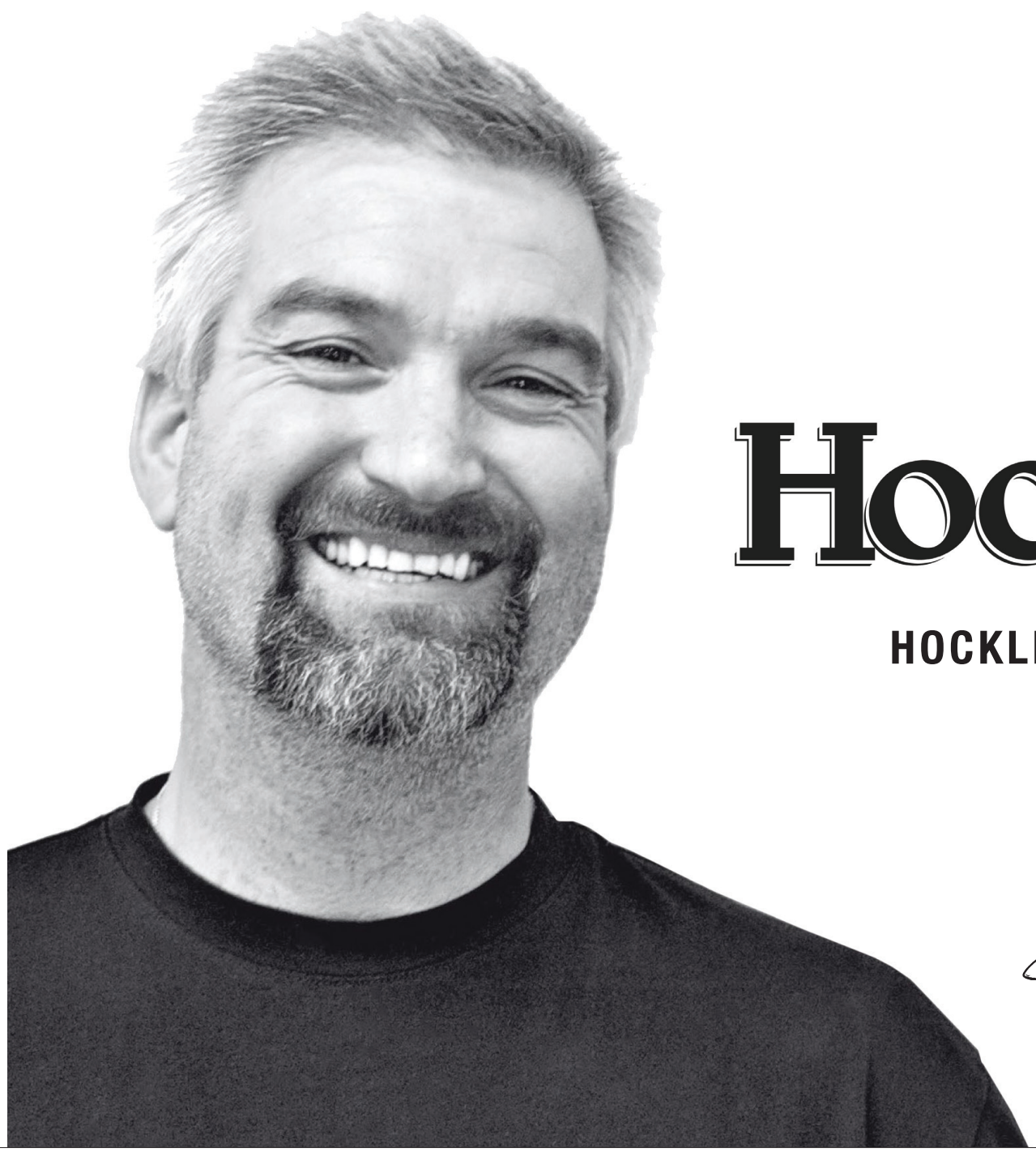

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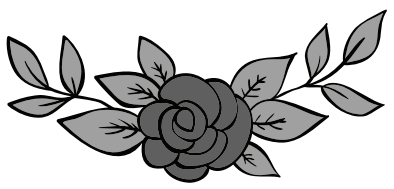

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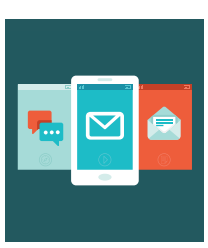

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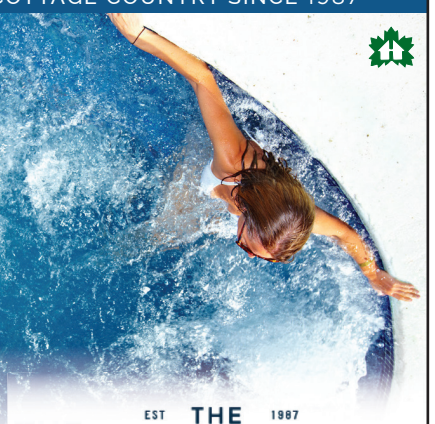

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Early visit

Barely six weeks old and already Quentin O'Connell has established a rapport with Santa Claus, although the conversation at this point may be a little one sided. Quentin and the Jolly Old Man from the North Pole met Wednesday evening during the open house and Light the Trees celebration at the Haliburton Hospital. Santa may be on hand this Wednesday as well when the Minden Health Centre hosts its ceremonial lighting of the trees and open house.

S.G. Nesbitt Memorial Arena

Former reeve remembered as arena is named in his honour

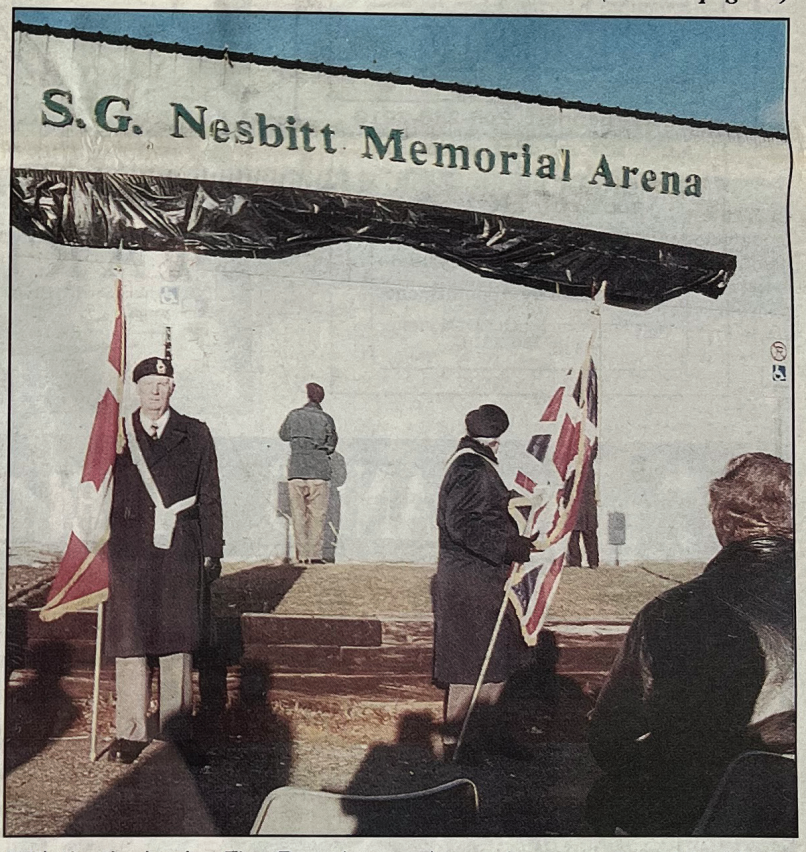
The arena in Minden now bears the name of S.G. (Sinc) Nesbitt. The arena was dedicated to the memory of Sinc Nesbitt at a special ceremony on December 3, with the unveiling of the lettering on the side of the building.

Anson, Hindon and Minden Reeve Jeanne Anthon said the council "wanted the community to remember Sinc in a permanent way so that, over the generations, people will be constantly reminded that this man was someone very special to our life in Haliburton County."

"In contemplating a suitable tribute, council and staff asked ourselves, 'what was most special to Sinc?' We remembered many conversations across the council table that made it clear Sinc cared so much about young people and he had a particular way of showing it in our community — through his commitment to youth activities and, in particular, through hockey," Anthon said. "In fact, our MPP Chris Hodgson said he knew Sinc through the hockey arena earlier than he ever knew him through the political arena."

Anthon noted that Nesbitt spent many hours at the Minden arena, watching all levels of competition, "from men's league games to toddlers making their first shaky attempts on the ice."

(more on page 17)



With the the Legion Flag Party in attendance, the new name of the Minden arena was unveiled Sunday afternoon. The facility will now be known as the S.G. Nesbitt Memorial Arena, in memory of former reeve Sinclair Nesbitt.

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